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The Message of the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work.

I.

1. The Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work, assembled at Stockholm from August 19 to 30 1925, and composed of representatives of the greater number of Christian communions coming from thirty-seven nations of the Old and New Worlds, and of the Near and Far East, sends this brotherly message to all followers of Christ, beseeching them to join with them in prayer, confession, thanksgiving, study and service. We regret that not all Christian communions have found it possible to accept our invitation, for in view of the vital and far reaching issues with which we have been concerned, we cannot but hope for that cooperation of all parts of the Church of Christ without which its testimony and influence in the world must be incomplete.

2. For five years men and women have planned and prayed that this Conference might be held. Other efforts for closer relations between the Churches have prepared the way. But this has proved the most signal instance of fellowship and co-operation, across the boundaries of nations and confessions, which the world has yet seen. The sins and sorrows, the struggles and losses of the Great War and since, have compelled the Christian Churches to recognise, humbly and with shame, that "the world is too strong for a divided Church". Leaving for the time our differences in Faith and Order, our aim has been to secure united practical action in Christian Life and Work. The Conference itself is a conspicuous fact. But it is only a beginning.

3. We confess before God and the world the sins and failures of which the Churches have been guilty, through lack of love and sympathetic understanding. Loyal seekers after truth and righteousness have been kept away from Christ, because His followers have so imperfectly represented Him to mankind. The call of the present hour to the Church should be repentance, and with repentance a new courage springing from the inexhaustible resources which are in Christ.

4. It is a matter for deep thankfulness that in the plan of God and through the guidance of His Spirit the representatives of so many Christian communions have been led to assemble and have renewed in common fellowship their faith, hope and love in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. It is a matter for deep thankfulness that in spite of differences, sincere and profound, they have been enabled to discuss so many difficult problems with a candour, a charity and a self-restraint, which the Spirit of God alone could inspire. As we repeated the Lord's prayer together, each in the speech his mother taught him, we realised afresh our common faith, and experienced as never before the unity of the Church of Christ.

II.

5. The Conference has deepened and purified our devotion to the Captain of our Salvation. Responding to His call "Follow me", we have in the presence of the Cross accepted the urgent duty of applying His gospel in all realms of human life — industrial, social, political and international.

6. Thus in the sphere of economics we have declared that the soul is the supreme value, that it must not be subordinated to the rights of property or to the mechanism of industry, and that it may claim as its first right the right of salvation. Therefore we contend for the free and full development of the human personality. In the name of the Gospel we have affirmed that industry should not be based solely on the desire for individual profit, but that it should be conducted for the service of the community. Property should be

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regarded as a stewardship for which an account must be given to God. Co-operation between capital and labour should take the place of conflict, so that employers and employed alike may be enabled to regard their part in industry as the fulfilment of a vocation. Thus alone can we obey our Lord's command, to do unto others even as we would they should do unto us.

7. In the realm of social morality we considered the problems presented by over-crowding, unemployment, laxity of morals, drink and its evils, crime and the criminal. Here we were led to recognize that these problems are so grave that they cannot be solved by individual effort alone, but that the community must accept responsibility for them, and must exercise such social control over individual action as in each instance may be necessary for the common good. We have not neglected the more intimate questions which a higher appreciation of personality raises in the domain of education, the family and the vocation, questions which affect woman, the child, and the worker. The Church must contend not for the rights of the individual as such, but for the rights of the moral personality, since all mankind is enriched by the full unfolding of even a single soul.

8. We have also set forth the guiding principles of a Christian internationalism, equally opposed to a national bigotry and a weak cosmopolitanism. We have affirmed the universal character of the Church, and its duty to preach and practise the love of the brethren. We have considered the relation of the individual conscience to the State. We have examined the race problem, the subject of law and arbitration, and the constitution of an international order which would provide peaceable methods for removing the causes of war — questions which in the tragic conditions of to-day make so deep an appeal to our hearts. We summon the Churches to share with us our sense of the horror of war, and of its futility as a means of settling international disputes, and to pray and work for the fulfilment of the promise that under the sceptre of of the Prince of Peace, "mercy and truth shall meet together, righteousness and peace shall kiss each other".

9. We have not attempted to offer precise solutions, nor have we confirmed by a vote the results of our friendly discussions. This was due not only to our respect for the convictions of individuals or groups, but still more to the feeling that the mission of the Church is above all to state principles, and to assert the ideal, while leaving to individual consciences and to communities the duty of applying them with charity, wisdom and courage.

III.

10. If this goal is to be attained we recognise the pressing need of education. The individual must be educated by the Church, so that he may be enabled to exercise a Christian discernment in all things. The Churches must educate themselves by study, conference and prayer, so that being led by the Spirit of truth into all truth, they may be enabled in increasing measure to apprehend the mind of Christ. We recognise that the root of evil is to be found in the human will, and we therefore desire to re-emphasise our conviction that this will must be surrendered to the high and holy Will of God, whose service is perfect freedom. Even Christian ideas and ideals cannot save the world, if separated from their personal source in the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and unless themselves taken up into the personal life of the believer.

11. To this end we address our appeal first to all Christians. Let each man, following his own conscience, and putting his convictions to the test of practical life, accept his full personal responsibility for the doing of God's will on earth as it is in heaven, and in working for God's Kingdom. Let him in entire loyalty to his own Church seek to have a share in that wider fellowship and cooperation of the Christian Churches of which this Conference is a promise and pledge. In the name of this wider fellowship we would send a special message of sympathy to all those who amid circumstances of persecution and trial are fulfilling their Christian calling, and we would comfort them with the thought that they are thus brought into fellowship with the sufferings of Christ.

12. But we cannot confine this appeal to the Churches, for we gratefully recognise that now we have many allies in this holy cause.

We turn to the young of all countries. With keen appreciation we have heard of their aspirations and efforts for a better social order as expressed in the youth movements of many lands. We desire to enlist the ardour and energy of youth, the freshness and the fulness of their life, in the service of the Kingdom of God and of humanity.

We think also of those who are seeking after truth, by whatever way, and ask their help. As Christ is the Truth, so Christ's Church heartily welcomes every advance of reason and conscience among men. Particularly we would invite the co-operation of those teachers and scholars who in many special realms possess the influence and command the knowledge without which the solution of our pressing practical problems is impossible.

In the name of the Son of Man, the Carpenter of Nazareth, we send this message to the workers of the world. We thankfully record the fact that at present even under difficult conditions a multitude of workers in the different countries are acting in accordance with these principles. We deplore the causes of misunderstanding and estrangement which still exist and are determined to do our part to remove them. We share their aspirations after a just and fraternal social order, through which the opportunity shall be assured for the development, according to God's design, of the full manhood of every man.

13. We have said that this Conference is only a beginning. We cannot part without making some provision for the carrying on of our work. We have therefore decided to form a Continuation Committee to follow up what has been begun, to consider how effect can be given to the suggestions which have been made, to examine the practicability of calling another such Conference at a future date, and in particular to take steps for that further study of difficult problems and that further education of ourselves and of our Churches, on which all wise judgement and action must be based. May we not hope that through the work of this body, and through the increasing fellowship and co-operation of the Christians of all nations in the one Spirit, our oneness in Christ may be more and more revealed to the world in Life and Work.

14. Only as we become inwardly one shall we attain real unity of mind and spirit. The nearer we draw to the Crucified, the nearer we come to one another, in however varied colours the Light of the World may be reflected in our faith. Under the Cross of Jesus Christ we reach out hands to one another. The Good Shepherd had to die in order that He might gather together the scattered children of God. In the Crucified and Risen Lord alone lies the World's hope.

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

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